STEP 8

戦いに向けて（たたか）

I THOUGHT THIS THE MOMENT I SAW HOSHIIMIKI.
JUST BEING NEAR THEM, YOU CAN FEEL THEIR DAZZLING AURA.
TRUE GENIUSES REALLY DO EXIST IN THIS WORLD.
YOU'VE BEEN STARING INTO THE MIRROR THE WHOLE TIME...
WHAT'S THE MATTER, AI-CHAN?
HRM.
I WONDER IF IT'S REALLY OKAY TO COMPETE WITH SOMEONE LIKE THAT.
YOU'RE NOT SOME KIND OF APPLIANCE!!
LIKE SO... AN AWESOME HALO OF LIGHT FLASHING FROM MY WHOLE BODY!!
NOTHING... I WAS JUST WONDERING IF I CAN SPARKLE LIKE HOSHII MIKI TOO..
AN AURA!!!

TODAY'S SHOW IS A LIVE BROADCAST SO YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH ANY MISTAKES.
ANYWAY... IT'S ALMOST TIME SO ARE YOU TWO READY?
YOU'RE UP FOR IT, RIGHT? AI-CHAN!
ER, IT'S ALREADY TIME!?
I'M RARING TO GO!!
YOU DON'T LOOK SO SURE, AI-CHAN!
UGH... THERE'S A LOT OF PRESSURE IF IT'S A LIVE BROADCAST.
BUT I HAVE TO TRY...
I TOLD YOU LAST TIME YOU SHOULD JUST CHILL OUT LIKE ME!

H-
H-HOSHII MIKI! ...-SAN?
WHY ARE YOU...
WHY, YOU SAY... LOOKS LIKE I'M GOING TO BE ON THIS SHOW TOO.
I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT,
にこっ
GUYS☆
W... WHAT!? HER AURA!!
EVERY-ONE...
HER POWER HAS INCREASED SINCE THE LAST TIME WE MET!!

ゴオオオ
TODAY'S A LIVE SHOW.
SO I'LL REALLY GIVE IT MY ALL.
GUYS... THIS MUST BE A SUPER IDOL'S TRUE POWER...!?
WE'RE NO MATCH FOR HER!!
I.... CAN'T GO ON...
RYOU -SAN!!?
ME TOO... MY HEAD IS SWIM-MING...
I CAN'T STAND UP...
EVEN ERI-SAN!!

AI-CHAN... I HAVE ONE MORE REQUEST...
GET... GET A HOLD OF YOURSELF, ERI-SAN!!
BEAT...
YOU MUST...
HOSHII -SAN... OKAY?

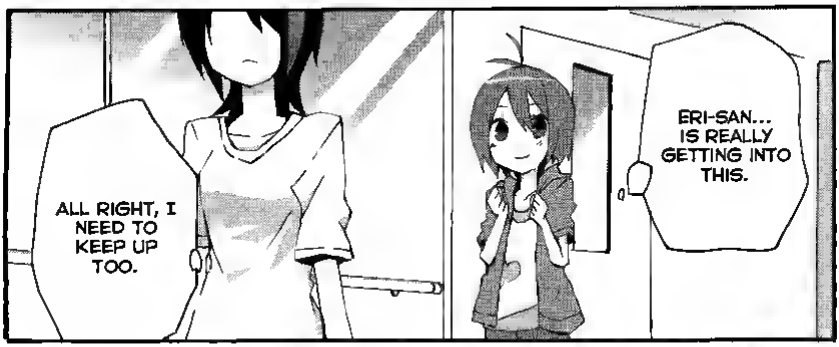
E...
ERI-SAAAAAAAN
ナーん
ナーん
ナーん
GOOD MORNING, MAMA.
OH, GOOD MORNING, AI! YOUR VOICE CARRIED PRETTY WELL AGAIN THIS TIME.

IT'S LIKE, I'M RESTING UP FOR MY SHOWDOWN WITH HOSHII MIKI.
BUT I'M NOT EVEN READY TO WIN IN MY DREAMS.
HAD ANOTHER WEIRD DREAM?
BLEH... WELL, SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
HOSHII MIKI?
OHHH, I'VE BEEN SEEING HER ON TV A LOT LATELY.
THAT GIRL HAS HER LOOKS AND VOICE DOWN BUT SHE'S NOWHERE NEAR ME. MORE LIKE...
I'M BEGGING YOU, DON'T COMPARE US TO YOU!!
BUT ARE YOU REALLY READY TO CHALLENGE HER?
NOT AT ALL. THAT'S WHY I'M WORRIED.
BUT I SAID I'D DO IT
SO I SHOULD AT LEAST HAVE A GO AT IT!

WHAT'S UP? SCHOOL'S OUT TODAY, YOU KNOW?
HUH, IT'S ALREADY THIS LATE!?
AND NOW FOR THE 8 O'CLOCK NEWS.
!?
I WOULDN'T GO OUT IN MY PAJAMAS IF I WERE YOU.
I'M OFF!!
I'M SUPPOSED TO TRAIN WITH ERI-SAN IN THE MORNING!
SHE'S GIVING ME ALL KINDS OF ADVICE!
AHHH!!!

SOMEHOW
THAT LOOKS REALLY FUN.
GOOD MORNING!
GOOD MORNING! AI-CHAN.
SORRY I'M LATE, ERI-SAN...
NO, IT'S OKAY.
ANYWAY, LET'S HURRY UP AND START?

YEAH!
WE'RE ALMOST OUT OF TIME TOO... LET'S DO THIS EFFICIENTLY!
IF WE WANT TO BEAT HOSHII-SAN, OUR USUAL TRAINING WON'T BE ENOUGH...


ALL RIGHT, I NEED TO KEEP UP TOO.
ERI-SAN... IS REALLY GETTING INTO THIS.

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GOOD WORK, AI-CHAN.
HOW WAS THAT? I DID THAT DANCE THE BEST I COULD.
4!
HMM... THE JUMP WAS A LITTLE...?
WHA!? EVEN THOUGH I PRACTICED THAT PART THE MOST!?
YEAH... SORRY? I THINK IT'S GOOD THAT YOU'RE MAKING SUCH AN EFFORT
BUT IT WOULD BE BETTER IF YOU DIDN'T JUMP QUITE SO HIGH?

AND YOU SHOULD ALSO EXAMINE THE SPOT YOU'RE JUMPING TO ON THE STAGE...
IF YOU JUMP THAT HIGH YOU'LL MISS THE BEAT ON THE NEXT STEP.
FLOOR PLAN.
FLOOR PLANT?
JUST NOW YOU WERE JUMPING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STAGE, RIGHT?
IT'S SO YOU'LL GET AN IDEA OF THE FLOOR PLAN AND WHERE YOU'RE POSITIONED ON THE STAGE.
JUST GET UP HIGH AND LOOK DOWN?
EXAMINE?
YOU ALSO NEED TO TAKE THE LIGHTING INTO ACCOUNT AND ADJUST BASED ON IT?
?
?
DO IT THERE AND EVEN IF YOU JUMP HIGH, IT WILL LOOK LOW.. YOU SHOULD GET CLOSER TO THE AUDIENCE.

G... GOT IT!
NOW, USING WHAT I SAID, GIVE IT ANOTHER TRY?
THAT SIDE STEP WAS A BIT TOO SHORT.
LEAN MORE INTO THE PIVOT SO YOU CAN SPRING OUT WITH THE OTHER LEG.
??
NO... YOU'RE GOING FORWARD TOO MUCH, THINK ABOUT THE AUDIENCE'S LINE OF SIGHT AND APPROXIMATE DISTANCE.
??
わーん
I DON'T GET IT!
I...
AT THIS PART, COULD YOU TILT YOUR UPPER BODY BACK ABOUT 15 DEGREES?
AND YOU CAN'T NEGLECT THE HAND MOTION.
LIKE DRAWING A HALF CIRCLE, NEXT TIME GO SLOW AND BOLD.

PHEW.
WHY WAS I BORN SUCH AN IDIOT-
WHAT'S WRONG ALL OF A SUDDEN, AI-CHAN?
UGH. MY MIND AND BODY ARE BOTH CRAMPING.
...IT'S... NOT GOING SO WELL TO BE HONEST.
WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME LEFT UNTIL WE FACE HOSHII MIKI BUT...
OH YEAH, IT LOOKED LIKE YOU WERE PRACTICING PRETTY HARD WITH ERI-CHAN
BUT HOW'S IT GOING?

I'M STARTING TO... NOT ENJOY SINGING ANY MORE...
BUT EVERYTHING ERI-SAN SAYS IS SO COMPLICATED
I'M VERY THANKFUL FOR THE ADVICE

YOU LOOKED DOWN RECENTLY SO I PICKED THIS UP.

!?

I DON'T UNDERSTAND BUT I THINK YOU'RE GOING TO CAVE THE CEILING IN?
BANG BANG BANG BAAANG!
I WANT TO DO IT MORE FREELY LIKE THIS!!

EH... WHAT!?
COULD IT REALLY BE.. THAT FAMOUS SHOP'S LIMITED SUPPLY ROLL CAKE!!!
IT'S ALL YOURS.
I KNOW YOU WANTED IT SO I WAITED IN LINE TO GET ONE.
ANYWAY, WHY DON'T YOU TRY TALKING TO ERI-CHAN?
IT SEEMS LIKE THE BIGGEST PROBLEM IS THAT YOU'RE NOT SAYING WHAT YOU WANT TO SAY.
I THINK SHE'LL UNDERSTAND IF YOU'RE DIRECT
.....
TALK IT OUT ...RIGHT?

ARE YOU OKAY? AI-CHAN!
OW... THINKING WHILE I DO IT IS KIND OF HARD.
KYA!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO THINK ABOUT ANYTHING WHILE YOU'RE DOING IT.
IF YOU JUST REMEMBER MY ADVICE AT THE IMPORTANT SPOTS...
VISUALIZE YOUR OWN SHAPE
WHILE STAYING CONSCIOUS OF THE VARIATIONS IN YOUR MOVEMENT...
.....

NO WAY!
I DON'T GET IT AT ALL!
JUST LIKE MANAMI-SAN SAID, I SHOULD TALK ABOUT IT, HUH?
UM, ERI-SAN!!
?
W... WHAT IS IT??
ぴと...
I... I NEED TO TALK!
ABOUT HOW WE'RE PRACTIC-ING!!
Y.. YEAH?
I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING UNTIL NOW...
?
I'LL BE CLEAR ABOUT THIS!!

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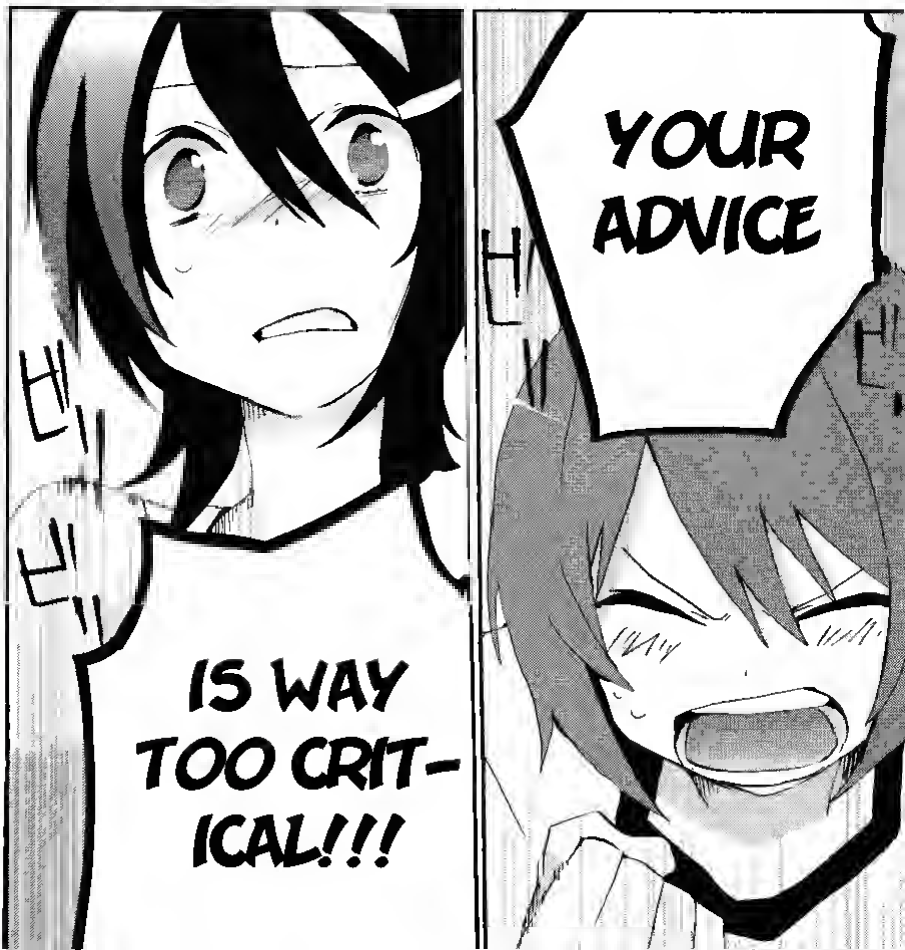
YOUR ADVICE
IS WAY TOO CRIT-ICAL!!!

I'LL SPIT IT ALL OUT, I'M ABOUT TO EXPLODE!!!
I'M THINKING WITH ALL MY MIGHT BUT I CAN'T UNDERSTAND ANY-THING!!
BEING AN IDOL WAS SUPPOSED TO BE FUN BUT...
I DON'T THINK I LIKE DOING THIS ANY MORE!!!

I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD KEEP FORCING EACH OTHER LIKE THIS.
YOU AREN'T FOLLOWING MY ADVICE EITHER... BECAUSE IT'S TOO HARD, RIGHT...!?
!
IF I KEEP STRUG-GLING LIKE THIS...

ERI-SA...
I DON'T LIKE DOING THINGS I'M BAD AT EITHER
BUT IF I DON'T HOSHII-SAN WILL...

.....
...AH
OH NO... WHAT DO I DO...

SINCE IT'S ERI-SAN
SINCE IT'S ERI-SAN I THOUGHT SHE'D UNDER-STAND!!
WHAT!?
YOU MADE ERI-CHAN CRY!?
AI-CHAN... DID YOU HAPPEN TO YELL AT HER AGAIN...?
YES... AND I WAS GOING TO APOLO-GIZE YESTERDAY BUT SHE DIDN'T EVEN SHOW UP FOR PRAC-TICE...
BUT I WANTED TO MAKE SURE SHE HEARD ME CLEARLY!!
WELL YOU'RE FORBIDDEN TO SHOUT AT ERI-CHAN...

キィ…
SO TRY TALKING TO HER AGAIN, OKAY?
ANYWAY, I'M SURE SHE'LL COME TODAY.
……
ビクッ
OH, SPEAK OF THE DEVIL…
GOOD MORN-ING…
ぎくしゃく
Ah.. ah.. ah.
Eri-sa-sa-san… Good…
Good Mor… ning…
……

!!?
バビューン

WHAT DO I DO...
ERI-SAN HATES ME NOW!!!

SHE.... RAN AWAY AT FULL SPEED...?
WHAT... THE HELL.

THAT REMINDS ME. TODAY I DREAMED THAT I DEFEATED EVERYONE IN 876 PRO WITH MY AURA.
WAIT... WHAT?
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